

UNUSUAL THINGS HAPPEN IN CALGARY

By

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Alberta seems like a fabulous country where anything can happen. If a story sounds logical people scarcely believe it, but if it's fabulous they know it has a ring of honest truth.

For instance we really have fine weather here in Calgary. Still, not content to say our weather is good; it has to be extraordinary. To do this we make lots of tales. An Easterner was visiting one of our ranches. He saw, hanging from the limb of a tree, a great logging chain with heavy steel links. "What's that for," asked the Easterner. "That's how we measure the wind," replied the rancher. When the chain rattles a bit it's breeze. When she swings ^{it's a} ~~with the~~ wind. When it blows out straight like a pennant - it's a gale."

Along with the tales of high winds go sagas of the marvellous sharpness of the air of southern Alberta. People gasp with wonder when they first see Calgary, because every building looks as though it had been cut out of cardboard, and set neatly on a clean stage with an unbelievably blue sky for a background. Sometimes you'll see a mirage - a group of elevators up in the sky, or the reflection, high in the air, of a whole village. But even without the mirage distances are deceptive. Look at the mountains on a clear bright day and you'll figure you could go over and touch them. But they're really a hundred miles away. One time a stranger stood admiring the scenery to the west. People asked him to guess how far the mountains were away. He was astonished to learn that, instead of his guess of twenty miles,

they were over three times that distance. The stranger thought that over for a while, then turned to a man who was standing nearby and said: "What a stupendous country!" The man he spoke to happened to be stone deaf, and ~~didn't~~ hear. The stranger looked at him for a moment then shrugged his shoulders. "How dumb of me," he said to himself, "I should have realized that guy's probably fifteen miles away!"